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*In the Abstract:*

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ABSTRACT

A substrate is etched in a vacuum enclosure in a process which generates plasma light emission. The process is monitored by passing emitted light via a window, a thin film narrow band filter and a "Fabry-Perot" etalon to a detector. The output signal from the detector is analysed by shape recognition techniques to derive a measure of the progress of the process. The shape recognition preferably makes use of digital filtering and comparison with reference data derived from the theoretical analysis or from a calibration run.